

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

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FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER FROM AMBASSADOR SCALI

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, VN, VS

SUBJECT: CATHOLIC REQUEST FOR USG AID IN BRINGING 5,000
ADOPTABLE CHILDREN FROM VIETNAM

1. MONSIGNOR THEODORE MCCARRICK, CARDINAL COOKE'S SECRETARY,
FATHER ROBERT CHARLEBOIS, REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF EAST ASIAN -
PACIFIC CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES, AND MONSIGNOR EUGENE CLARK,
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK,
CALLED ON ME TODAY. TO FOLLOW UP ON CARDINAL COOKE'S PHONE CALL
TO ME, THEY REQUESTED USG ASSISTANCE IN BRINGING TO THE US UP TO
5,000 ADDITIONAL ADOPTABLE ORPHANED AND ABANDONED CHILDREN FROM
THE SAIGON AREA. THIS NUMBER IS IN ADDITION TO 2,000 CHILDREN
FROM VIETNAM FOR WHOM ADOPTION ARRANGEMENTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN
MADE.

2. THIS REQUEST ENCOMPASSES THE UNDERTAKINGS OF CATHOLIC
RELIEF SERVICES AND OTHER AMERICAN VOLUNTARY RELIEF SERVICES
WHO HAVE COORDINATED THEIR HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS IN VIETNAM.

FOUR KINDS OF ASSISTANCE ARE REQUIRED:

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A. FINANCIAL SUPPORT - CRS AND ASSOCIATES ALREADY HAVE

WHEREWITHAL FOR SUBSTANTIAL EFFORTS BUT WILL REQUIRE OVER NEAR TERM ADDITIONAL SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORT THAT CANNOT BE ESTIMATED AT THIS STAGE. CRS HAS IN MIND PROGRAM COMPARABLE IN MANY WAYS TO FINANCIAL SUPPORT RENDERED REFUGEE CHILDREN FROM CUBA AND HUNGARY BY HEW. CRS EMPHASIZES THAT THIS IS NOT OPEN-ENDED PROGRAM. THEY DO NOT FORESEE AT THIS TIME THAT MORE THAN 5,000 CHILDREN WOULD BE INVOLVED. ADDITIONALLY, THEY NOTE CHILDREN ARE VIRTUALLY ALL UNDER SEVEN YEARS OF AGE FULLY ABLE TO BE ADOPTED AND THAT MANY THOUSANDS OF OFFERS OF ADOPTION ARE ALREADY POURING IN. ALL CHILDREN ARE PRESENTLY LOCATED IN CRS-SUPPORTED ORPHANAGES IN SAIGON AREA FOR ADOPTION AND HAVE BEEN SCREENED TO MAKE SURE THERE ARE NO PHYSICAL OR OTHER PROBLEMS.

B. TRANSPORTATION - CRS PROPOSES URGENTLY THAT AN EMERGENCY AIR LIFT BE UNDERTAKEN BY AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT. CRS PROPOSES IT BEGIN IMMEDIATELY BEFORE MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS PREVENT A HUMANITARIAN RESCUE OPERATION.

C. BLANKET IMMIGRATION AUTHORITY FOR ENTRY INTO THE US OF THESE ADOPTABLE CHILDREN - SOME OF WHOM ARE NOT COMPLETELY DOCUMENTABLE. TERM ADOPTABLE AS USED IN THIS MESSAGE MEANS THAT CHILDREN ARE BOTH LEGALLY FREE TO BE ADOPTED AND MEET NORMAL HEALTH REQUIREMENTS OF US STATE LAWS.

D. GVS CLEARANCE FOR ADOPTION - CRS HAS OBTAINED PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE FROM THIEU GOVERNMENT IN PAST FOR SUCH ADOPTION. HOWEVER, ADDITIONAL BLANKET AUTHORITY OF GVN AUTHORITIES WILL BE REQUIRED BEFORE THE ADOPTION AND EVACUATION OF THE EXTRA 5000 CAN BEGIN. CRS BELIEVES THIS RELEASE CAN BE OBTAINED PROMPTLY ONLY IF HIGH LEVEL USG REQUEST MADE DIRECTLY TO PRESIDENT THIEU HIMSELF. PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESSFUL BID TO THIEU WOULD BE ENHANCED, WE THINK, IF THIEU WERE INFORMED THAT FATHER CHARLEBOIS IS TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WELFARE OF THE CHILDREN. FATHER CHARLEBOIS IS WELL KNOWN TO THIEU AND TO AMBASSADOR MARTIN.

3. CRS HAS TOLD US THEY INTEND TO INFORM AID ADMINISTRATOR PARKER AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB OF THEIR ADDITIONAL NEEDS.

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4. IN ANSWER TO MY SUGGESTION, CARDINAL COOKE HAS ADVISED ME HE WILL BE CONTACTING KEY MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN CATHOLIC HIERARCHY IN EFFORT TO OBTAIN A PUBLIC STATEMENT ENDORSING USG REQUEST FOR SYG WALDHEIM TO APPEAL PUBLICLY TO ALL PARTIES TO AVOID INTERFERENCE WITH EFFORTS OF VIETNAMESE TO FLEE COMMUNIST ARMIES TO SAFE HAVEN OF THEIR OWN CHOICE.
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